



Fall 2006

The Waterfront-Looking Forward

by Michael McElwee

A key area of focus for the Port in the coming months is the Columbia River Waterfront west of the Hood River. To state the obvious, despite extensive efforts made over the past 20 years — including master

plans and development proposals — the waterfront looks much the same as it did 20 years ago. Depending on your point of view, the lack of progress might be considered bad . . . or good! It may be unclear why more progress hasn't been made on the waterfront after such extensive efforts. Simply put, dedicated people with good intent have not yet been able to reach consensus about the future of the waterfront.

However, everyone seeks collaboration, and progress on the waterfront. The Port Commission is committed to it. I'm optimistic it can happen soon.

Here's why:

The high level of community and business interest in the waterfront. Alternative visions are expected. But I would much rather work with engaged and committed stakeholders than the alternative! I believe this high level of community involvement is, in fact, the key to long-term success on the waterfront.

The recent dedication of the park site to the city. This contribution represented a major commitment by the Port to a vision of additional family-oriented recreation on the waterfront. The land transfer of the land gives greater certainty to a largest stretch of riverfront property.

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The Port of Hood River and community members seek input about of the Hood River Expo Center, and will be gathering comments at a public meeting on November 9th.



Port, community explore future of Expo Center

A comprehensive, multi-faceted analysis of the Hood River Expo Center is in progress by the Port of Hood River to determine best current and future use of the facility. The Port has already met with several community groups and members, and more input will be sought at a public meeting on **Thursday, November 9th 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Hood River Expo Center.**

Stakeholder and user input was gathered during a series of meetings facilitated by Dr. Charles Bugge in October that sought ideas on the following questions:

- How does the current Expo Center benefit the community?
- How do you see the Expo Center being used in other ways in the future?
- If the Expo Center were no longer available for its current uses, what impact would it have on you, your business or the community? What alternative might be available?
- What other important considerations should be part of deliberations regarding the future of the Expo Center?

Adding to this feedback are results of three studies the Port recently initiated: a building condition analysis by AE Associates; a report of the Expo Center's economic impact by E.D. Hovee & Co. LLC; and an architectural study looking at adaptive re-use or improvement of existing use performed by Hennebery Eddy Architects.

The main reason for the Port's exploration of Expo Center feasibility is consistent financial losses the Port incurs

each year for building operation and maintenance due to its underutilization. The facility is the largest public indoor venue in the county for local and regional events. Some events attract thousands of visitors to the area, however optimum convention use requires critical amenities and infrastructure lacking at the Hood River Expo Center.

The Expo Center houses the Hood River County Chamber of Commerce office and Visitors Center. Additionally, the facility provides the venue for the Chamber's largest annual fundraiser, the Hood River Valley Harvest Festival. A special meeting addressing Chamber of Commerce concerns is scheduled for November 9th.

Creation of a convention center in Hood River was a goal of the Port Commission during the 1990s to augment the economic vitality of the region. In 1993, the Port began work on the transformation of the former Clark Door building into an exhibition hall to help encourage year-round tourism. It underwent major renovation in 1995 at a cost of \$1.3 million, \$900,000 of which came from a

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, adding restrooms, electrical, lighting, and HVAC systems. The Expo Center parking lot was constructed in 1997, adding 165 vehicle spaces.

In 1997, the Port entered into a public/private partnership agreement with D.M. Stevenson Ranch (DMSR) for the development of a hotel and conference facility east of the Hood River Expo Center. DMSR, as part of the agreement, would have remodeled the Expo Center, including kitchen facilities and breakout rooms, once the hotel/convention center was built. However, that agreement was terminated in 1999 by the sitting Port Commission. Since then, the facility has booked around 30 events each year, but continues to operate in the red.

The Port's review of Expo Center benefits, shortcomings, and opportunities should help the Port Commission plan its next steps with the facility.

Key questions on which the Port of Hood River seeks community input are available on the Port's web site (www.portofhoodriver.com). Responses may be submitted to the Port by email at porthr@gorge.net, by faxing to 541-386-1395, or by mailing to Port of Hood River, P.O. Box 239, Hood River, OR 97031.

Bridge project begins with a schedule crunch

An early start to the Port of Hood River Interstate Bridge Toll Facility Improvement Project — and one month of night closures — will result in an expedited construction schedule that should see bridge closures unlikely during the holiday season.

Construction began Monday, October 23, with day and night shifts. **During night shifts Mondays through Thursdays only, the bridge will be CLOSED from 9:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. for approximately one month.**

Complete bridge closures are necessary for a few reasons, according to Linda Shames, Port Finance Manager, who oversees the bidding process and bridge construction planning for the Port. Wildish Standard and Paving Company was awarded the bid for the nearly \$2 million project.

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High School Intern to focus on community outreach, administration

One Hood River student is gaining firsthand knowledge of local government this school year, serving as an intern at the Port of Hood River. Elliott Daggett, a Hood River Valley High School senior, began his internship at the Port in October and will focus on



Intern Elliott Daggett

public administration and community relations as the academic year progresses.

“The first two weeks were phenomenal, and I expect the next six months with the Port to be fast-paced and challenging,” Daggett says.

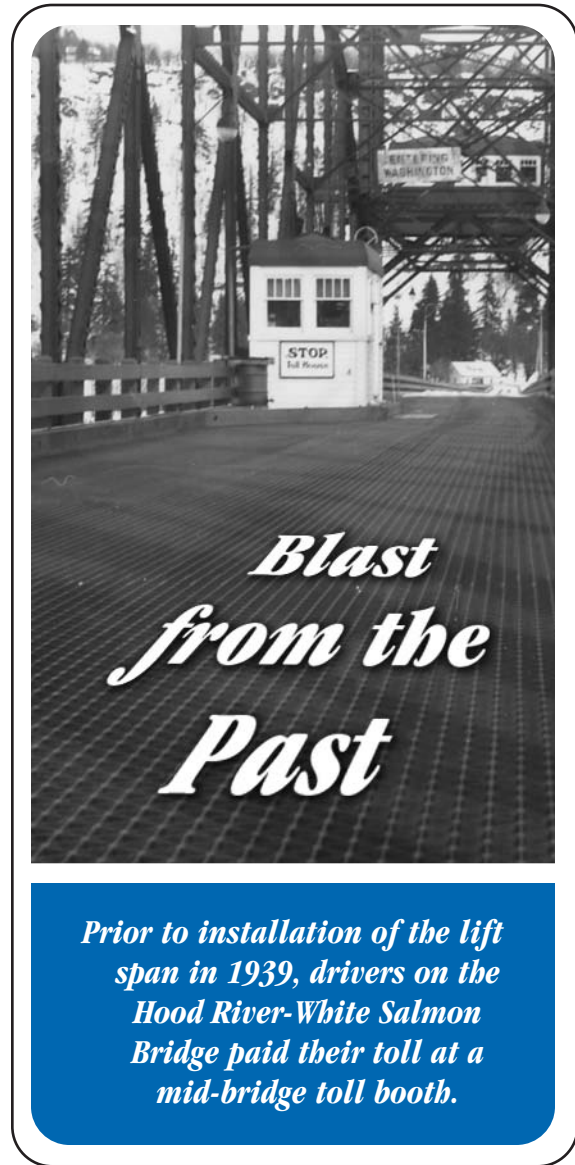
This is the first time in recent years the Port has brought an intern on board. Wendy Herman, Hood River Valley High school-to-work advisor, approached the Port. Daggett submitted a resume with cover letter before being interviewed for the internship. The Port plans to continue to offer similar internships in the coming years, says Executive Director Michael McElwee.

Daggett has been involved in student government, speech and debate. He helped found a local chapter of Amnesty International and participated in the Ford Foundation’s community leadership program.

“I have been looking for ways to study policy-making and the day-to-day workings of our community’s government. Since the Port plays a key role in the economic health of our community, I thought I’d enjoy an opportunity to learn more about the Port,” Daggett explains.

Daggett will be working to help on public relations and community outreach under the supervision of Port Marketing Manager Mike Doke.

These internships are designed to give students insights into career pathways through hands-on experience. Students gain job preparedness, career research and employability skills. This spring, they will participate in an Internship Night, when they will give a presentation on their community and career experience.



Blast from the Past

Prior to installation of the lift span in 1939, drivers on the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge paid their toll at a mid-bridge toll booth.

PORT DIRECTORY

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PORT MEETINGS

Regular Port Commission meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Expo Center Conference Room. The Port welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.

Icon West Development launches major

From one of Hood River’s most scenic offices overlooking the Hood River Marina, Icon West Developments executes grand scale plans for a mixed-use waterfront community in The Dalles. The company was granted project approval in early 2006 for the development of the 60-acre Lone Pine Village, west of The Dalles Bridge, that will likely occur over the next decade.

When the 32 acres of the 60-acre project are completely built out, the land will host 248 eco-friendly residential units and numerous commercial buildings amid shoreline green space and vast Columbia Gorge views, complete with a pier, a small craft dock, and a 10-mile riverfront trail that ultimately connects the Gorge Discovery Center to The Dalles Dam.

Project partners Robert Gilham and Scott Keillor, both residents of Hood River, teamed up for the project that is currently in its first phase. Keillor is a land-use planner who worked formerly with HHP (Harper Houf Peterson Righellis, Inc.), the previous four-year tenant of the same

Port Marina office space. Gilham, an accountant and perennial businessman, is a British transplant who settled his family in Hood River after many years of recreational vacationing in the area.

The first development phase of Lone Pine Village consists of six commercial parcels, nine townhome lots, and 24 single-family unit lots on nearly 12 acres, built by Hale Construction of Hood River. Market response to the initial phase will determine the pace of following phases, to be governed by CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions). Keillor calls the first phase a “project sampler plate,” that will create jobs and housing along a segment of the riverfront trail with a water feature and a pedestrian-friendly “mainstreet.”

When all is said and done, 74 single-family homes, 87 townhomes, 87 condominiums, and 91,000 square feet of retail and office space will create a miniature community, complete with live/work opportunities and its own grocery store.

Marquis retires after 20 years steering Electronics Assemblers

Electronics Assemblers, Inc., one of Hood River's oldest tech companies, salutes the retirement of its founder and long-time president, Howard Marquis, after nearly 20 years at the helm. Marquis' departure from day-to-day activities comes during a most welcome resurgence in business, resulting in 13 new jobs in the past six months—a significant expansion up to 27 total employees.

Electronics Assemblers, Inc. (EAI) continues to do what it's done through the technology booms and busts over the years, mainly building electro-mechanical assemblies, cable and wire harnesses, and prototypes as a contract manufacturer. During the technology boom of the 90s, EAI was a major Hood River employer generating 92 paychecks at its peak, with payroll exceeding \$1.5 million.

"There have been many changes in the industry over the years: mergers, downsizing, outsourcing, closings," Marquis states. "Though we still have many of our old customers, the industry landscape has changed dramatically."



Jim Van Dyke and Howard Marquis show off assembly units for a new order. Van Dyke, new president of Electronics Assemblers, Inc., will take over day-to-day business operations from recently retired founder Howard Marquis.

EAI meets the needs of a variety of electronics customers that provide products in diverse industries such as computer, telecommunications, automotive, medical, and more.

Long-time loyal customers include Credence and Cascade Microtech, while many new customers, such as Electro Scientific Industries, outsource subassemblies to EAI. Now the company conducts business with such hefty industry names

as Hewlett-Packard and Sun Microsystems.

A significant reason for the EAI's recent success has been its focus on business development. Jim Van Dyke was hired two years ago to learn company operations in order to focus on business development, and his efforts have paid off. With new customers and the general improvement in the economy, sales are picking up. This year, third quarter sales doubled first quarter figures. The company is on a controlled growth pattern and has hired an operations manager, a project manager, and numerous assemblers.

"Howard built the company over the last 20 years with processes and pieces in place to be able to go after big companies. It's made business development much easier," Van Dyke observes. "It's always been his mission to deliver high quality products on time, and that has become the cornerstone of our business model."

Marquis, who came to Hood River after 30 years in financial management at General Motors, is quick to credit the Port of Hood River as an important partner for the company. "Our association with the Port of Hood River will be 20 years next March," Howard states. "The Port has been a good partner through our business ups and downs, enabling us to grow rapidly initially to accommodate nearly 100 employees, and to downsize when the recession hit," he recounts. "Without the Port's support, staying in business may have been impossible. We plan to continue to work with the Port to be sure we have space to grow."

Van Dyke, who recently became General Manager of EAI, was just promoted to company president, succeeding Marquis. Marquis will continue involvement as chairman of the board, though leisure will afford him more time for travel and helping in his small orchard. "I think his new title will be 'Rugged Entrepreneur to Gentleman Farmer,'" Van Dyke jokes.

r Gorge project

Access off Highway 97 was a critical issue, resolved with a "roundabout" intersection into the development that will be completed in the next couple years. The partners have also worked closely with surrounding businesses and property owners to identify and address other potential issues.

"We've been encouraged by the local support we've received," Gilham notes. "The timing seems right. By adding more quality, higher-end housing, the current 'regeneration' of The Dalles could be a boon for the whole area."

Icon West Development, the Port of Hood River's newest tenant, will contribute to the region's economic future not only with jobs in its Hood River office, but by utilizing the services of multiple local contractors and businesses over the next decade. "The various ports throughout the Gorge understand that economic development, when it comes to good jobs, is blind to borders," states Port Marketing Manager Mike Doke.



Robert Gilham (left), Scott Keillor, and Jayme Bennett of Icon West Developments of Hood River will guide development of Lone Pine Village in The Dalles.

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The progress being made by the Naito Corporation to develop the vacant Nichols Boat Works site. City Council recently authorized a zone change and efforts are underway to transform this “Brownfields” site into a positive contributor to the economy. If this project occurs it will significantly define the future of the Nichols Basin.

Immediate opportunities for business development and job creation. A recent report by consultant Eric Hovee pointed out the need to find locations for growing local businesses or we could lose them to other communities. The waterfront area contains much of the light industrial land in Hood River. It possesses excellent

access, existing infrastructure and locational qualities that can support business growth and job creation.

The potential of the Expo Center site. The Port is taking steps to evaluate this facility, including its operations, condition, economic impact and potential for commercial or enhanced visitor industry uses. The building accommodates some large community functions, including the Harvest Fest, but incurs a significant financial loss and is underutilized much of the year. The Expo Center is at the center of the waterfront and can be a much more significant contributor to its’ success. The Port is seeking input from the community and stakeholders to assist in making decisions about the future of the Expo Center.

Everyone I speak with reminds me that the waterfront serves as the premier water access point in the gorge, acts as the front door for the City of Hood River, lies adjacent to a national scenic area and is in full view of much of downtown. Everyone believes it can contribute in a far greater way to the Hood River economy and to the area’s quality of life.

In a community that is “landlocked” for many vital needs (including both parks and light industry), successful development of the waterfront must achieve multiple objectives. The challenge, as always, will be in reaching consensus about how best to achieve those objectives. The Port is dedicated to working in collaboration to move forward and create a successful waterfront the whole community can embrace.

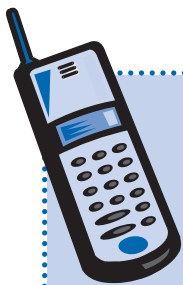
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BRIDGE CLOSURES **Monday thru Thursday Nights from 9:30pm to 5:00am until approximately Thanksgiving**

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BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION NOTIFICATION LIST & CALL LINE

To subscribe to the Port’s Email Notification List for updates on bridge construction and possible delays, log on to the Port’s web site:

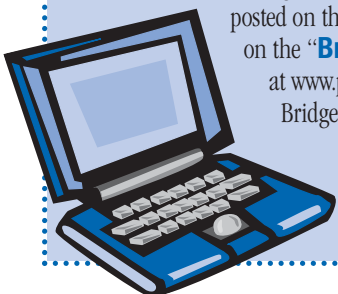
www.portofhoodriver.com

Bridge construction information is also available by phoning

541-386-1645

Bridge closures and delays are posted on the Port’s web site. Click on the “**Bridge Update**” link at www.portofhoodriver.com.

Bridge notifications will be sent or posted whenever schedule changes occur.



“We understand it’s inconvenient for many, but the closures will allow for a significant amount of work to be performed within a short time,” Shames relates. “The physical geography of the toll plaza area does not allow heavy equipment to maneuver in the area while traffic passes. Also, local asphalt batch plants close generally by Thanksgiving.”

Shames says the contractor has only 30 days to build two lanes, pave, and move a significant number of utilities. The south side of the Port Marina Park entrance is known to utility companies as the “grassy knoll area,” where multiple utility pedestals are located. That utilities list includes Embarq, Charter Communications, Pacific Power, Northwest Natural Gas, and Williams Gas Pipeline, underscoring the amount of coordination involved in this accelerated project timeline. “Practically every utility comes to this one spot, and they all have to be relocated,” Shames says.

Wildish Standard and Paving is planning four 10-hour shifts — not stopping for lunch breaks — to move the project along as quickly as possible. This schedule allows the bridge to remain open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

The Hood River Interstate Bridge will be open to emergency vehicles at all times, and the Port has met with all emergency agencies to discuss the project construction schedule. Bridge users should call 9-1-1 if an emergency makes bridge passage necessary during closures.

After road widening and paving of new lanes, the Port anticipates traffic interruption entering and exiting the bridge will be intermittent for the duration of the project. Once new lanes are constructed, temporary toll-booths will be placed on the outside lanes while construction of the new toll house and roadways occurs.

The new toll plaza should open with four-lane capacity by May, 2007. The two new lanes will become automatic collection toll lanes on the outsides of traditional toll collection lanes. The Port’s new electronic tolling system will utilize reader cards mounted in vehicles that identify people enrolled in the program.

The Toll Facility Improvement Project complements Oregon Department of Transportation’s planned improvements to alleviate congestion in this area. Increased bridge capacity is one piece of the solution. Four-way stops at interstate on and off ramps will later be added. At its worst, traffic congestion in this area results in Interstate-84 back ups, when vehicles on off ramps at Exit 64 spill back onto I-84, creating the danger of rear-end collisions.

The new automatic tolling system will enable drivers to cross the bridge without stopping or even opening a window. “I believe frequent bridge users will be very pleased with the end results of this project next spring,” Shames anticipates. “The Port of Hood River appreciates travelers’ patience and understanding during this construction time.”

For more information or to relay concerns, the Port office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff can be reached by phone, (541) 386-1645, or by email at porthr@gorge.net.